



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Director of Mental Health
Acting Director of Health Services
Interim Director of Community and Senior Services
Director of Planning

At its meeting held January 24, 2006, the Board took the following action:

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Supervisor Burke made the following statement:

“Over the past few years, we have seen a tremendous influx in the number of ‘sober-living’ homes locating within residential communities throughout Los Angeles County. While many, if not most, appear to be operating within the parameters of State and local regulations, there is a disturbing increase in the incidence of abuse of sober-living residents, not only in the areas of actual care and lodging, but also in the areas of so-called client ‘recruitment.’

“Community residents and the Lennox School District have brought to the County’s attention an example of this problem wherein an apartment building is being used to house a large number of what appear to be mostly mentally-ill men and women housed in sub-standard living conditions with allegations of physical abuse on the part of facility staff. Located adjacent to an elementary school, a middle school and a State preschool, these unsupervised individuals are venturing out into the school yard, are often seen sitting on school benches, harassing and threatening children and approaching teachers asking them for money.

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“While the following departments are conducting an ongoing investigation into this particular facility:

- Community Care Licensing - State of CA;
- Adult Protective Services - (Community and Senior Services);
- LA County Department of Mental Health;
- Department of Public Health (Health Services);
- Regional Planning; and
- Sheriff's Department

“We need to examine these kinds of incidents and ensure that the affected departments are empowered with the appropriate policing authority to regulate, close down and remove and relocate individuals who are being abused and unable to care for themselves.”

Therefore, Supervisor Burke made a motion that the Directors of Mental Health, Public Health, Planning, Community and Senior Services' Adult Protective Services, and the Sheriff, be requested, in collaboration with the State Community Care Licensing, to report back to the Board on:

1. The status of the investigation of the apartment building located in the Lennox School District being used to house a large number of what appear to be mostly mentally-ill men and women in sub-standard living conditions with allegations of physical abuse on the part of facility staff, including any discussions with the District Attorney, and other facilities operated by the owner and/or their family or associates;
2. A review of all sober-living applications pending before the County;
3. The increasing incidence of regulatory issues and problems with sober-living facilities Los Angeles County;

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4. An inventory of the existing remedies available to the respective departments and agencies encountering the incidence of abuse and unlawful activities; and
5. Recommendations from the departments and agencies of what is needed further to prevent the escalation of abuse at these types of facilities.

John F. Schunhoff, Chief of Operations, Public Health, Department of Health Services, and Dr. Marvin Southard, Director of Mental Health, responded to questions posed by the Board.

Ken Schonlaun, representing Sober Living Network, and Michael R. Bauer also addressed the Board.

After discussion, Supervisor Antonovich made a suggestion that Supervisor Burke's motion be amended to instruct the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a five-signature letter to the Governor and the members of the State Legislature, requesting that the State of California subject "sober-living" homes to local zoning regulations. Supervisor Burke accepted Supervisor's Antonovich amendment.

Supervisor Burke's motion, as amended, seconded by Supervisor Antonovich, was unanimously carried (Supervisor Molina being absent).

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Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
District Attorney
Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Director of Public Health

Letter sent to:

Sheriff